LETTERS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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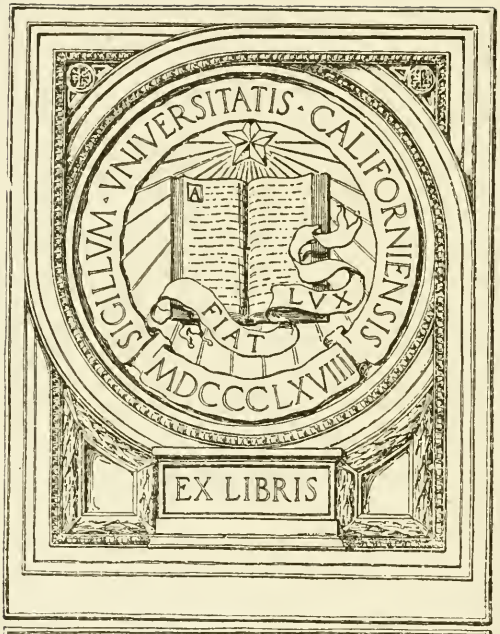
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LETTERS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT;

ADDRESSED TO

THE REV. R. POLWHELE; D. GILBERT, ESQ.;

FRANCIS DOUCE, ESQ. &c. &c.

ACCOMPANIED BY AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN,

BART. K.C.B. K.G.H.

LONDON:

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

1832.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It will be perceived that the greater part of the present publication is a memorial of the intercourse enjoyed with Sir Walter Scott by the Rev. Mr. Polwhele. The Publishers have to express their thanks to Francis Douce, Esq. for the communication of two original letters, one of them immediately connected with a subject discussed between Sir Walter and Mr. Polwhele; and the other relating to Mr. Douce's own celebrated work, the "Illustrations of Shakspeare." To these they have ventured to append a miscellaneous collection; being assured that, at this period, nothing that has ever proceeded from the pen of Walter Scott will be unacceptable to the public.

TO

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART, ESQ.

Sir,

May I presume to hope that you will condescend to accept with candour this very humble offering, from the humblest of authors, as a tribute of GRATITUDE to your DEPARTED FRIEND.

The individual, who thus presumes to address you, would fain, amidst the universal pœans, lift up his voice. How feeble! Yet, were it to resound from "one end of the earth to the other," inadequate indeed were the applause to the merits of its illustrious object! Come, then, "expressive silence!"

With the liveliest sentiments of regard for yourself, and all related and so justly dear to "THAT GOOD AND GREAT MAN," believe me

Most respectfully yours,

R. P.

Polwhele, near Truro;
Nov. 30, 1832.

INTRODUCTORY LINES.

THE following introductory lines (so far as they are marked with inverted commas) formed part of a letter to Sir Walter Scott, in answer to one of his kind communications to a very humble individual, who, notwithstanding the vain fancies of youth, or the garrulous egotism of old age, never trusted to his own strength—never confided in his own judgment; but, in all his literary productions, invariably looked up to others for assistance or support.

"YES! I have many a ditty sung,
When Hope was gay, and Fancy young;
Here, where along the glimmering lawn
The blackbird's clarion thrill'd the dawn;
And to the dim declining day
The redbreast pour'd her plaintive lay.
"Sweet o'er the dews, how sweet the breeze
Whispering thro' my infant trees—

My sycamores, that firm display'd
(First of all the varied shade)
Purpling sprays and buds between;
So large a leaf—so bright a green;
That, with a schoolboy's fond delight,
I rear'd, I wooed their southern site;
As Mira to my labours lent
A sister's care and sentiment!

"Her pretty flowers, that learn'd to breathe
Down the gentle slope beneath,
And open'd to the summer sun—
The brother's mutual tendance won.
And we had melody at will
For every jasmine and jonquil!
And we had music—such a store—
We sang to every sycamore!

"Sweet, too, was our sequester'd dell:
It had its grotto and a well,
Fair willows and a water-fall;
An ancient beech that shelter'd all.
'Nymph of the grot'——our nymph was Taste!
Her light, in shadowy softness, chaste;
Mild as the summer's vesper-hour:
Nor toil could ask a cooler bower.

Clear was our well, and running o'er ;
And polish'd was its pebbled floor.
To moontide beams, that pierc'd the glade,
Its crisped waters sparkling play'd.
Thus Innocence bids sunshine rest
On the pure untroubled breast!

" And lo! as headlong down the rock
On the beach roots the torrent broke,
Its broad foam flashing to the sight,
It wash'd the spreading fibres white.
Yet, tho' it pleas'd, yet, all the while,
(Such is the world's deceitful smile,)
Our hoary friend it undermin'd :
Attractive thus is treachery kind.

" Blest were, indeed, those fleeting years !
But soon my solitary tears,
Staining the crystal of my well,
Drop after drop in silence fell,
To speak a brother's earliest grief,—
So falls the sad autumnal leaf!

" And now, to yon responsive stream
Half-utter'd was Eliza's name.
Lone on its banks the lover stray'd,
And thither lured his charming maid ;

The foliage twinkled from above,
Conscious of inspiring love;
The winding pathway's easy flow
Waved in a gentler curve below;
Each flower assumed a softer hue,
And closed its cup in balmier dew.
" But 'twas my lot ere long to roam
A listless exile, far from home—
Far from these walls that mark my birth:
To rear my unambitious hearth,
Where Courtenay's turrets crown the groves,
And vermeil meads that Isca loves,
And, nearer to the admiring gaze,
Exotic Flora's gorgeous blaze!
'Twas then, on topographic lore,
Some evil genius bade me pore;
Borne on swift steed of keen research,
Hunt out a ruin or a church;
Unfold, tho' faint from wan disease,
By lurid lamps, dull pedigrees;
The look of blank indifference rue,
But still the thankless toil pursue,
And brave the insidious critic's flame,
Unrecompensed by gold or fame.

" Vain—vain regrets, avaunt! The Muse
Tints Life's decline with mellower hues.
The grove I nurst, when yet a child,
Tho' now a thicket dark and wild,
Where rise my statelier sycamores,
Its spirit to my soul restores:
And midst the ivied boughs, I break,
And listen to the hawk's shrill shriek,
Flush from her nook the barn-owl gray,
And chase—how pert—the painted jay.

" But though long years have sped their flight,
I languish for my grotto light;
I languish for my water-fall,
And my old beech that shadow'd all.
Alas! the flood hath ceased to roar;
And my beech-roots are blancht no more;
The green brook on its sedges sleeps;
With foxgloves shagg'd, the grotto weeps;
And one poor willow seems to join
In widow'd woe its sighs with mine!

" And thou, lov'd stream! again I court
Thy mossy marge, my lone resort;
Delightful stream! whose murmurs clear
Soothe, once again, my pensive ear;

That wanderest down thine osier'd vale,
Where passion told the melting tale ;
Thy twilight banks, to memory sweet,
Again I tread with pilgrim feet.

" Tho' not the same the scene appear,
As when in youth I sauntered here,
'Tis with no languid glance I see
This winding path, that aspen tree ;
But eager catch, at every pace,
Of former joys some fading trace.

" Nor do I mourn the cold regard
Of sordid minds that slight the Bard,
As thus, tho' care or sorrow lour,
I steal from gloom a cheerful hour ;
As, no mean intermeddler nigh,
My boyish steps I still descry ;
Still, midst my budding lilacs pale,
Refresh'd their vernal promise hail ;
If jocund May waft life and bloom,
Still see some fairy power illume
The orient hills with richer light ;
Still see, with fluid radiance bright,
Some fairy power the pencil hold,
To streak the evening cloud with gold.

"And if, in sooth, a wish aspires
Beyond these satisfied desires;
'Tis that my song, tho' unrefined,
May not displease some kindred mind,
And (haply far remote from me)
That mine one generous heart may be,
If Heaven to Truth and Feeling lend
The last best meed——in Scott, my friend!"

So did I blend, in simple measure,
With gladness sorrow—pain with pleasure.
Such was my too aspiring song,
The lowliest of the tuneful throng.
He, I presumed "my Friend" to call,
He was alike the friend of all!
A gracious smile was mine at most,—
His friendship was too proud a boast!
And now his cordial wishes seem
The sweet illusion of a dream.
Last-left of all the minstrel choir,
Who bade me wake my trembling lyre,
Eliciting a deeper tone,
He, too, alas! how lov'd!—is gone;
And moaning to his distant bier,
A feeble shade, I linger here:

Here, where the dark Bolerium raves,
Where oft I hail the dashing waves;
Or roam thro' caverns scoop'd on high,
And heave unnoticed many a sigh,
Thro' caverns fit for moody minds
To chaunt, unheeded, to the winds!

Yet Fancy's witchery could impart
Some comfort to an old man's heart;
As genial spirits seem'd to say,
'Midst glens and mountains far away:
"String thy neglected harp anew,
Nor need detraction's hissing crew,
Stern glances showing hearts of flint,
The jealous scowl, the satyr-squint!"

Ah me! as from among the dead,
The voice is lost—the vision fled!
And scenes long past of joy and pain
Come wildering o'er my aged brain!
I try to tune my harp in vain!*

R. P.

* See "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

LETTERS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER I.

COMMUNICATION FROM MR. SCOTT (THROUGH CLEMENT CARLYON, ESQ.) TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, MANACCAN.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, Sept.* 1, 1803.

You will excuse my troubling you with a letter on the bare chance of giving you some trifling information with respect to Cornwall. Mr. Scott, of Edinburgh, is preparing to republish an old metrical romance, entitled Sir Tristrem, the particulars of which are, that it was written by Thomas of Erceldoune, commonly called the Rhymer

who flourished in the reign of Alexander the Third of Scotland, and is believed to have died previous to 1299. The story treats of the loves of Ysonde and Tristrem, and the scene is laid in Cornwall. The edition in question will be made from an unique copy in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, not for the intrinsic merit of the romance as a poetical production, which certainly would never have caused its being rescued from confinement, but as a genuine record, too valuable to remain hanging by a single thread.

This sole relic of Thomas the Rhymer's muse is the oldest specimen we possess of compositions of the kind, and one of the few that can be proved decidedly of British origin. It is referred to by Robert de Brunne, in his Metrical Annals of England, (published by Hearne,) and was translated into French verse early in the 13th century, after which probably it was dilated into a prose romance in French of considerable length, in

which Sir Tristrem figures as a Knight of the Round Table, whereas no mention is made of King Arthur, either by Thomas of Erceldoune or his French translator. The principal dramatis personæ are Mark King of Cornwall, Ysonde his Queen, and his nephew Sir Tristrem. Of course the story abounds in wondrous exploits; but from the frequent references that have been made to it, and the veneration that attaches still to the memory of the author, the fiction perhaps is more closely interwoven with truth than usually happens. The topography may for the most part be ascertained at the present day, and the few exceptions fairly referable to the stroke of time, may consequently be looked upon as no inaccurate guides towards ascertaining the former existence of places now withdrawn from view. Mention is more than once made of a Cornish port of the name of Carlioun, with which perhaps the origin of our name is connected; but

this is rather a private concern, and I content myself with touching on it. If the circumstance of the existence of the romance interest you at all, in the developement of your history, it will sufficiently gratify me. I need hardly add that I shall readily prosecute any enquiries respecting it that may suggest themselves to you as of any importance, and I am happy in my friend Mr. Scott's permission, to say that the respect which he entertains for you as an historian, and the sympathies by which the Muses have in a peculiar degree connected you, make him anxious to assist you, should it lie in his power, in your literary pursuits. If his Minstrelsy of the Borders has fallen into your hands, of which I can hardly allow myself to doubt, it is superfluous for me to say more of him; if otherwise, I certainly do not incur the risk of future apologies in pointing out to you a very elegant and *generally* interesting specimen of the fruits of *Local Attachment.*

Mr. Scott is desirous that our worthy Historian of Manchester should be acquainted likewise with the high esteem in which he is held on this side of the Tweed; nor does any one, I am sensible, esteem him more highly than Mr. Scott himself, which I should have been less forward in adding had he been less capable of appreciating Mr. Whitaker's merit.

As my sheet admits of it, I shall subjoin the first stanza of the romance; the rest are equally devoid of poetical merit.

I was at Erceldoune,
With Tomas spak y thare;
Ther herd y rede in roune,
Who Tristrem gat and bare,
Who was king with crown;
And who him foster'd yare;
And who was bold baroun,
As their elders ware,
Bi yere;
Tomas telles in toun,
This aventours as thai ware.

With compliments to Mrs. Polwhele, I remain, dear Sir, very truly yours,

CL. CARLYON.

P. S. Mr. Scott's directions are, *Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh;* but with regard to myself I hardly know where a letter is most likely to find me for the next month to come, as my intention is to move from hence in a very few days; probably my first fixed point will be Pembroke Hall, Cambridge.

LETTER II.

WALTER SCOTT, ESQ. TO REV. R. POLWHELE.

SIR, *Castle-street, Edinburgh,* 27 *Jan.* 1804.

I am honoured with your letter of the 16 January, and lose no time in communicating such information about Sir Tristrem as I think may interest you.

Tristrem (of whose real existence I cannot persuade myself to doubt) was nephew to Mark King of Cornwall. He is said to have slain in single combat Morough of Ireland, and by his success in that duel to have delivered Cornwall from a tribute which that kingdom paid to Angus King of Leinster. Tristrem was desperately wounded by the Irish warrior's poisoned sword, and was obliged to go to Dublin, to be cured in the country where the venom had been confected. Ysonde, or Ysende, daughter of Angus, accomplished his cure, but had nearly put him to death upon discovering that he was the person who had slain her uncle. Tristrem returned to Cornwall, and spoke so highly in praise of the beautiful Ysonde, that Mark sent him to demand her in marriage. This was a perilous adventure for Sir Tristrem, but by conquering a dragon, or, as other authorities bear, by assisting King Angus in battle, his embassy

became successful, and Ysonde was delivered into his hands, to be conveyed to Cornwall. But the Queen of Ireland had given an attendant damsel a philtre, or aphrodisiac, to be presented to Mark and Ysonde on their bridal night. Unfortunately, the young couple, while at sea, drank this beverage without being aware of its effects. The consequence was the intrigue betwixt Tristrem and Ysonde, which was very famous in the middle ages. The romance is occupied in describing the artifices of the lovers to escape the observation of Mark, the counterplots of the courtiers, jealous of Tristrem's favour, and the uxorious credulity of the King of Cornwall, who is always imposed upon, and always fluctuating betwixt doubt and confidence. At length he banishes Tristrem from his court, who retires to Brittanye (Bretagne), where he marries another Ysonde, daughter of the Duke of that British settlement. From a vivid recollection of his

first attachment he neglects his bride, and, returning to Cornwall in various disguises, renews his intrigue with the wife of his uncle. At length, while in Brittanye, he is engaged in a perilous adventure, in which he receives an arrow in his old wound. No one can cure the gangrene but the Queen of Cornwall, and Tristrem dispatches a messenger entreating her to come to his relief. The confident of his passion is directed if his embassy be successful to hoist a white sail upon his return, and if otherwise a black one. Ysonde of Brittanye, the wife of Tristrem, overhears these instructions, and on the return of the vessel with her rival on board, fired with jealousy, she tells her husband falsely that the sails are *black*. Tristrem concluding himself abandoned by Ysonde of Cornwall, throws himself back and dies. Meantime the Queen lands and hastens to the succour of her lover—finding

him dead she throws herself on the body, and dies also.

This is the outline of the story of Tristrem, so much celebrated in ancient times. As early as the eleventh century his famous sword is said to have been found in the grave of a King of the Lombards. The loves of Tristrem and Ysonde are alluded to in the songs of the King of Navarre, who flourished about 1226, and also in Chretien de Troyes, who died about 1200. During the 13th century Thomas of Erceldoune, Earlstown in Berwickshire, called the Rhymer, composed a metrical history of their amours. He certainly died previous to 1299. His work is quoted by Robert de Brunne with very high encomium. For some account of this extraordinary personage I venture to refer you to a compilation of ballads, entitled, the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, v. II. p. 262, where I have endeavoured to trace his history. It is his metrical romance

which I am publishing, not from a Scottish manuscript of coeval date, but from an English manuscript apparently written during the minority of Edward III. The transcriber quotes Tomas as his authority, and professes to tell the tale of Sir Tristrem as it was told to him by the author. The stanza is very peculiar, and the language concise to obscurity; in short what Robert de Brunne called, in speaking of Sir Tristrem, "queinte Inglis," not to be generally understood even at the time when it was written. The names are all of British, or, if you please, Cornish derivation, as Morgan, Riis, Brengwain, Urgan, Meriadoc, &c. Tomas of Erceldoune lived precisely upon the Borders of what had been the kingdom of Strath Cluyd; and. though himself an English author, naturally adopted from his British neighbours a story of such fame. Perhaps he might himself be *utriusque linguæ doctor*, and a translator of British Bards.

It happens by a most fortunate coincidence, that Mr. Douce, with whose literary fame and antiquarian researches you are probably acquainted, possesses two fragments of a metrical history of Sir Tristrem in the French, or I should rather say in the Romance language. One of them refers expressly to Tomas as the best authority upon the history of Tristrem, though he informs us that other minstrels told the story somewhat differently. All the incidents of these fragments occur in my manuscript, though much more concisely narrated in the latter. The language resembles that of Mademoiselle Marie. Tintagel Castle is mentioned as Mark's residence, a fairy castle which was not always visible. In Tomas's Romance the capital of Cornwall is called *Caerlioun*, as I apprehend *Castrum Leonense*, the chief town of the inundated district of Lionesse, from which Sir Tristrem took his surname. The English and French poems throw great light upon each other.

When the art of reading became more common, the books of chivalry were reduced into prose, the art of the minstrel being less frequently exercised. Tristrem shared this fate, and his short story was swelled into a large folio now before me, beautifully printed at Paris in 1514. In this work the story of Tristrem is engrafted upon that of King Arthur, the romance of the Round Table being then at the height of popularity. Many circumstances are added which do not occur in the metrical copies. It is here that the heresy concerning the cowardice of the Cornish nation first appears; there is not the least allusion to it in the ancient poems, and it is merely introduced to give effect to some comic adventures in which Mark (le roy coux) is very roughly handled, and to others in which certain knights, presuming upon the universal poltroonery of the Cornish, attack Tristrem, and according to the vulgar phrase "catch a

Tartar." This volume is stated to be compiled by Luce, Lord of the castle of Gast, near Salisbury, a name perhaps fictitious. But Luce, if that *was* his real name, is not singular in chusing the history of Tristrem for the groundwork of his folio. There are two immense manuscripts on the same subject in the Duke of Roxburghe's Library, and one in the National Library at Paris, and probably many others. The Morte Arthur which you mention, is a book of still less authority than the Paris folio. It is not a history of the Cornish hero in particular; but a bundle of extracts made by Sir T. Mallory, from the French romances of the Table Round, as Sir Lancelot du Lac, and the other folios printed on that subject at Paris in the beginning of the 16th century. It is therefore of no authority *whatever*, being merely the shadow of a shade, an awkward abridgement of prose romances, themselves founded on the more ancient

metrical *lais* and *gests*. I suppose, however, Gibbon had not Mallory's authority for his observation; which he probably derived from the elegant abridgement of Sir Tristrem (I mean of the prose folio) published by Tressan, in "Extracts des Romans de la Chevalerie."

I would willingly add to this scrambling letter a specimen of the romance of Tomas of Erceldoune; but I am deterred by the hope of soon having it in my power to send the book itself, which is in the press.

I fear that in wishing fully to gratify your curiosity I have been guilty of conferring much tediousness upon you; but, as it is possible I may have omitted some of the very particulars you wished to know, I have only to add that it will give me the highest pleasure to satisfy, as far as I am able, any of Mr. Polwhele's enquiries, to whose literary and poetical fame our northern capital is no stranger. On my part I am curious to know

if any recollection of Sir Tristrem (so memorable elsewhere) subsists in his native county, whether by tradition or in the names of places. Also whether tradition or history points at the existence of such a place as Carlioun, which Tomas thus describes:

Tristrem's schip was yare,
He asked his benisoun,
The haven he gan out frere,
It hight Carlioun;
Nyen woukes and mare,
He hobled up and doun,
A winde to wil him bare,
To a stede ther him was boun
Neighe hand,
Deivelin hight the toun,
An haven in Ireland.

I may just add that Tristrem is described as a celebrated musician and chess-player, and as the first who laid down regular rules for hunting.

I beg to be kindly remembered to Mr. Carlyon, to whom I am much obliged for giving me an opportunity to subscribe

myself, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

P. S. Do you not conceive it possible that the name of our friend *Carlyon's* family, which I understand is of original Cornish extraction, may have been derived from the lost *Caerlioun ?*

LETTER III.

TO FRANCIS DOUCE, ESQ. F.S.A.

SIR, *Edinburgh, Castle-street, May* 7, 1804.

The warm recollection of your kindness, during my short stay in London, would have induced me to find out some means of acknowledgment, however trifling, even if the volume which I have now the honour to request you to accept had not derived a great share of any interest it may be found to possess, from the curious fragments upon the same subject which you so liberally com-

municated to me. I hope that in both points of view, the copy of Sir Tristrem now sent will be thought deserving of a place among your literary treasures. It is one of twelve thrown off, without a castration which I adopted in the rest of the edition, against my own opinion, and in compliance with that of some respectable friends: for I can by no means think that the coarseness of an ancient romance is so dangerous to the, public as the mongrel and inflammatory sentimentality of a modern novelist.

By honouring with your acceptance a "Tristrem entier," you will greatly oblige, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER IV.

TO DAVIES GILBERT, ESQ.

SIR, *Edinburgh, 29th Jan* 1808.

In availing myself of your kind offices to transmit the inclosed to Mr. Polwhele, I

should be very ungrateful did I omit to make my best acknowledgments to you for the favourable opinion which you have been pleased to express of my literary attempts. I have been labouring (at least working) upon another legend connected with the Battle of Flodden: I have only to wish that it may experience half the kindness with which its predecessor was received, and will be particularly happy should it be the case in your instance.

I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER V.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE.

DEAR SIR, *Ashestiel by Selkirk*, 21 *July*, 1808.

Owing to my residence in London for these some months past, I did not receive your letter till my return to Edinburgh

about a fortnight ago, since which time I have been overwhelmed with the professional duty that had been accumulating during my absence.

I consider it as no slight favour that you are willing to entrust to me the task of reviewing my early and great favourite the beautiful poem on Local Attachment, and I will write to Mr. Gifford, our chief commander, offering my services. The only objection I can foresee is the poem having been for some time printed; but it has been customary of late years to get over this. I will at the same time mention to Mr. G. your obliging offer of assistance, which I do not doubt he will consider as highly valuable. It may be necessary to say, however, that I myself have no voice in the management of the Quarterly Review, and am only a sincere well-wisher and occasional contributor to the work. The management is in much better hands; but I am sure Mr. Gifford will

be as sensible of the value of your co-operation as I should be in his situation.

Believe me, dear Sir, your much obliged truly faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

A writer, signing himself Alcæus, in one of the public prints, observes, that "in the 'Lay of the last Minstrel,' there is an evident imitation of the 'Local Attachment;' which, however, Walter Scott has had the ingenuousness to acknowledge. The latter poem opens with the following stanza:

'Breathes there a spirit in this ample orb
That owns affection for no fav'rite clime;
Such as the sordid passions ne'er absorb,
Glowing in gen'rous hearts, unchill'd by time?
Is it—ye sophists! say—a venial crime
To damp the love of home with scornful mirth?
Though, led by scientific views sublime,
Ye range, with various search, the realms of earth,—
Seeks no returning sigh the region of your birth?'

"The sixth canto of the 'Lay' opens thus:

'Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own—my native land?'

Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?'

"In a note on this passage, Scott says, 'the Influence of Local Attachment has been so exquisitely painted by my friend, Mr. Polwhele, in the poem which bears that title, as might well have dispensed with the more feeble attempt of any contemporary poet. To the reader who has not been so fortunate as to meet with this philosophical and poetical detail of the nature and operations of the love of our country, the following brief extract cannot fail to be acceptable:

'Yes! Home still charms: and he, who, clad in fur,
His rapid rein-deer drives o'er plains of snow,
Would rather to the same wild tracts recur,
That various life had marked with joy or woe,
Than wander where the spicy breezes blow,
To kiss the hyacinths of Azza's hair;—
Rather than where luxuriant summers glow,
To the white mosses of his hills repair,
And bid his antler train the simple banquet share.'

"Perhaps the above poem is more read in Scotland than in Cornwall. In a masterly criticism on the 'Living Poets of Great Britain,' (where the writer is extremely cautious of admitting those into his exhibition who do not deserve the name of *poets*), the 'Local Attachment' is spoken of very favourably.

'Among those poems,' says the reviewer, 'which have not received their due share of public attention, we are disposed to reckon Mr. Polwhele's 'Influence of Local Attachment,' which contains some passages of great beauty." See *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 1808.

"That an author is better known at a distance than at home, is a fact which is still more strikingly exemplified in the fate of a little poem entitled the 'Unsexed Females.' A large edition of this production was sold by Cobbett, in America, before a single copy of it, perhaps, had made its way into a Cornish library!

"August 1817. ALCÆUS."

The writer, who thus assumed the signature of *Alcæus*, was a physician of high eminence. But he no longer exists among us; to search (if any human intelligence could search) into the deep arcana of that mysterious disease, with which all around are at this moment threatened or afflicted! Of the poem in question, I was some time since employed in correcting it for a new edition, and had interwoven in the MS. the following (and many other) stanzas:

* * * * *

"But, oh! if torn from all we value most,
The inevitable doom be ours, to seek
A country distant from our own dear coast;
If fortune bear us, where with carnage reek

Gaunt wolves that emulate the vulture's beak;
'Tis not from battle-fields with fear we start:
We feel the vital strings asunder break,
When from the scene 'so native to our heart'—
When from our earliest love our boding sorrows part.

"There, where the blossom'd bough, the berried bush,
(Snapt, and by yester winds hurl'd down the steep,)
Gleams thro' subsiding waves; where oft would rush
The thunder-torrent with terrific sweep;
Poor peasant! in thy southern hollow deep,
That casement, kiss'd by pearly grapes, was thine
From simple childhood!—But I see thee weep,
Snatcht from thy cottage,——thy coeval vine,
As close about thy home thy first pure pleasures twine.

* * * * *

"There, in the transience of a rainbow shower,
Now darksome, now with various lustre clear,
Glistens the lattice of that Gothic tower!
And hark! how pleasant to the pensive ear
Its mellow music! Down yon watery meer,
Hark! how the stealing sweetness sinks away!
'Midst sad adieus, alas! the boding fear
Flutters around those pinnacles so gray;
And faint Hope lingers there, and looks with fond delay.

"Perhaps, more duteous than the vulgar tribe,
Thy virtue bade thee cling, when life was new,
To thy loved sire attacht—without a bribe!
Lo, kind affection to thy parent true,

There bore thee, where the wholesome cresses grew,
Or to the elder bourne, the hurtle nook—
Or to the yellow pear, the plum's rich blue,—
Or, with thy pitcher to the limpid brook,—
Or, to the dame, whose imps each thumbs his blister'd book.

"Perhaps a lover's, from its living bed
Yon cavern'd rock a softer tale may tell!
The pine-tree, that above its mantle spread,
And bade to Eve's fresh breeze its whispers swell;
And from the mossy roof the meek hare-bell—
All—all—(tho' mark'd with slight regard before)
Ask from thy feeling a distinct farewell!
And, yearning, thou wilt number o'er and o'er
The pebbles, red or white, that pave the gleamy floor.

* * * * *

"Such were the ideas which electric ran
Thro' Xenophon's dishearten'd troops, when bright
A prospect of the sea surpris'd the van,
Now as they gain'd the sacred mountain's height,
'The sea! the sea!' they shouted with delight;
And sparkled quick in every eye the tear!
Each o'er the billows strain'd his aching sight;
And, as 'The sea!' re-echoed from the rear,
Already seem'd to grasp the Home his soul held dear."

Here, who but in sorrow could imagine the dying Poet of "The Lay" returning with all possible expedition to his native country,—and ap-

proaching Abbotsford with a momentary renovation of strength and spirits ?

Descending the vale, at the bottom of which the prospect of Abbotsford first opens, "it was found difficult to keep him quiet in his carriage ; so anxious was he to rear himself up, to catch an early glimpse of his beloved scene." P.

LETTER VI.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 11 *Oct.* 1810.

This accompanies a set of poor Miss Seward's Poems, which I hope you will have the kindness to accept. Another cover will convey to you my three poems, which I regret to find have not reached you. Miss Seward left the greater part of her correspondence to Mr. Constable, of Edinburgh, who is I believe taking measures to publish them. It is very extensive, occupying many folio MSS., for she kept a copy of almost every letter which she wrote.

I will be much obliged to you to send your valued publications under cover to Mr. Freeling, or to John Wilson Croker, Esq. either of whom will forward them in safety.

As I know you are a great master of northern lore, and interested in all that belongs to it, I am anxious to bespeak your interest in favour of a publication intended to illustrate these studies. It is a quarto volume entitled Northern Antiquities, to be published by the Ballantynes of Edinburgh, for Messrs. Weber and Robert Jameson. May I hope that you will, either for this or the next volume, favour us with a communication? The subject (provided it be connected with antiquities) is entirely at your choice. I wished to add to the packet I transmit for your acceptance, a copy of Sir Tristrem, in whom as a hero of Cornwall you must doubtless be interested; but the edition is entirely out of print.

I am very glad indeed you like the Lady

of the Lake; but, if you knew how much I admire your poem on Local Attachment, you would not have threatened me with so terrible a compliment as that of laying down your own harp. Believe me, my dear Sir, very truly, your much obliged,

WALTER SCOTT.

P. S. Some time ago (several years now) I met with two very pleasant young men from Cornwall, Mr. Carlyon and Mr. Collins; to the former of whom I was indebted for the honor of being introduced to your notice. When you favour me with a line, I should like much to know how they have fared in life, which they were then about to enter upon.

I have read Miss Seward's Letters with great satisfaction. With her scenes in general I am but little acquainted: but I am well acquainted with many of her characters.

In the first volume of the Letters, Miss Hannah More and "the Bristol Milkmaid" are introduced. I

know something of this transaction. Miss H. More treated Lactilla contumeliously—I mean, as a poet would treat a poet:—but infinitely superior was Lactilla's poetry to Miss Hannah's! In the second volume is printed, very incorrectly, a lyric effusion which, though a mere trifle, I have reprinted (not *cum omnibus erroribus)* at pp. 647 and 648 of my "Traditions and Recollections."

In the fifth volume, Miss Seward, addressing Mr. Cary, says,—"Several of the simply beautiful and touching parts in Shenstone's charming Pastorals, have been laughably travestied." This burlesque appears in the "Devon and Cornwall Poets." It is ostensibly my old friend Major Drewe's. Had I told Miss Seward, that the ridicule which has thus raised her indignation, was started and pursued by the Major and myself, over a bottle of claret, my name would never, perhaps, have occurred in the list of her honoured friends. P.

LETTER VII.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 15 *Oct.* 1810.

I had the pleasure to write to you yesterday under the frank of Mr. Croker of the

Admiralty, forwarding a set of Miss Seward's works. But as I am uncertain whether this parcel may not reach you first, I trouble you with these few lines, to say that I enclose the Poems which you ought to have had long ago. I am sorry the Marmion does not rank with the others; but by some whim of the proprietors they have put it in the present shape, and I cannot find an octavo copy. The volumes you so kindly destine me, will reach me safely if sent under cover to J. Wilson Croker, Esq. Secretary to the Admiralty.

Referring myself for other matters to my former letter, I am ever yours truly,

W. Scott.

Archdeacon Nares was much pleased with my review of "Marmion," in the British Critic. P.

LETTER VIII.

TO REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN.

MY DEAR SIR, *Marlowe House, 30 Dec.* 1810.

It was very late this season before I got to Edinburgh, and consequently before I had the pleasure of receiving your valued present, on which I have been making my Christmas cheer ever since, until an ancient and hereditary engagement brought me here to spend the holidays with my chief, the Laird of Harden. I should be very ungrateful indeed, if I longer delayed the acknoweldgment of the pleasure I have received from the re-perusal of the "Local Attachment," and the "Old English Gentleman;" which, I take great credit to my taste in boasting, have been long favourites of mine, as well as from reading the other curious and interesting volumes with which I had yet to form an acquaintance. I have never had the good

fortune to see topographical labours conducted at once with the accuracy of the antiquary and the elegance of the man of general literature, until you were so kind as to send me your county histories; which, under a title not very inviting beyond the bounds of the provinces described, contain so much interesting to the general reader, and essential to the purpose of the English historian. You have furnished a folio and an octavo shelf in my little bookroom, with treasures which I shall often resort to with double pleasure, as pledges of the kindness of the ingenious author.

I wrote to Gifford about three weeks ago, mentioning my wish to take up the "Local Attachment." But he answers me that the present number is filled up; and in case he does not make room for me in the next, I must seek another corner for my critique, and I have cast my eyes upon the Edinburgh Annual Register, but I will wait to see what

our Generalissimo says about his next number. I shall not be sorry if he still declines my criticism, because I think I can weave it into a tolerably independent article, for the Register aforesaid.

Our "Northern Antiquities," as we have ventured to christen a quarto undertaken by Mr. Weber and Mr. R. Jamieson, both friends of mine, are to contain a great deal of Teutonic lore. Much of the first volume is occupied by an account, rather protracted I fear, of the Heldenbuck, a series of romances, referring to the history of Attila and Theodoric, and therefore very curious. Theodoric was to the Germans what King Arthur was to the English, and Charlemagne to the French Romancers—a leading King and champion, who assembled at his court a body of chivalrous Knights, whose various adventures furnish the theme of the various cantos of this very curious work.

This is executed by Henry Weber, who is

skin-deep in all that respects ancient Teutonic poetry, and it is perfectly new to the English Antiquary. Jamieson gives some translations from the Kiempe Visis, a collection of Heroic Ballads, published in Denmark, about the end of the sixteenth century. Their curiosity consists in a great measure in the curious relation they bear to the popular ballads of England and Scotland. Then I have promised to translate some Swiss war songs and other scraps of poetry. In short, our plan is entirely miscellaneous, and embraces any thing curious that is allied to the study of history, or more particularly to that of poetry. This is our plan, my good friend, and if you have any thing lying by you which you would intrust to this motley caravan, we will be much honoured. But I hope soon to send you the first volume, when you will judge how far we deserve your countenance. I will take care you have it so soon as published, and perhaps you may

like to review it for the Quarterly. I have little share in it, excepting my wish to promote the interest of the prime conductors, whose knowledge is rather more extensive than their financial resources.

I am very glad to hear that Drs. Collins and Carlyon are well, and settled in their native country. Though I have little chance of ever meeting them again, I cannot easily forget the agreeable hours their society afforded me at our chance meeting on the hills of Selkirkshire.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with the best wishes of this season, your obliged and grateful humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.

The gentlemen whom this letter celebrates, were indeed congenial spirits. One of them (my excellent relation, Dr. Collins) is "gone hence, to be no more seen!" But the other, we hope, will be long spared to us; from affluence, talent, and science, a distinguished member of a grateful community. P.

LETTER IX.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, July* 3, 1811.

I should be very ungrateful indeed, if in distributing the few copies I have retained of the inclosed drum and trumpet thing, I should forget to request your kind acceptance of it, especially as I am sure you will applaud the purpose, and pardon imperfections in the execution. I am so busy making up all my little parcels, that I have only a moment to add that I hope this will find you as well as I wish you. Believe me, dear Sir, your truly obliged,

WALTER SCOTT.

"The Vision of Don Roderick."

With one of the "*private copies*," of which fifty only were printed, I was presented by the benevolent author.

It was often insinuated, during the publication of

his poems in the ballad style, that Scott had not "that eagle wing" to carry him above the ballad song. How false! The Introduction in the Spenserian stanza, has an inimitable grandeur; and before the whole Poem, Beattie's Minstrel "hides his diminished head." P.

LETTER X.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, 1st Dec.* 1811.

I received yours, when I was in the very bustle of leaving Ashiestiel, which has been my summer residence (and a very sweet one) for these eight years past. It was not, however, for a distant migration, as I was only removing to a small property of my own about five miles lower down the Tweed. Now, although, with true masculine indifference, I leave to my better half the care of furniture and china, yet there are such things as books and papers, not to mention broad-swords and

targets, battle-axes and helmets, guns, pistols, and dirks, the care of which devolved upon me, besides the bustle of ten thousand directions, to be given in one breath of time, concerning ten thousand queries, carefully reserved for that parting moment, by those who might as well have made them six months before. Besides, I really wished to be here, and consult with my friends and publishers, the Messrs. Ballantynes, before answering the most material part of your letter. They will esteem themselves happy and proud to publish any thing of yours, and to observe the strictest incognito so long as you think that necessary. They only hesitate upon the scruple of its not being an original work, but a continuation of one already before the public; one or two attempts of the same kind having already been made unsuccessfully. I told them I thought the title-page might be so moulded, as not to express the poem to be a continuation of

Beattie's work, and that that explanation might be reserved for the preface or introduction. As this was an experiment, they proposed the terms should be those of sharing profits with the author—they being at the expense of print and paper. I can answer for their dealing honourably and justly, having already had occasion to know their mode of conducting business thoroughly well.

With respect to the work itself, I believe Beattie says, in some of his letters, that he did intend the Minstrel to play the part of Tyrtæus in some invasion of his country. But I conceive one reason of his deserting the task he had so beautifully commenced, was the persuasion that he had given his hero an education and tone of feeling inconsistent with the plan he had laid down for his subsequent exploits; and I entirely agree with you, that your termination of Edwin's history will be much more natural and pleasing than that intended by the author himself.

The MS. may be sent under cover to Mr. Croker or to Mr. Freeling. I will have the utmost pleasure in attending to its progress through the press, and doing all in my power to give it celebrity. I was under the necessity of making the Ballantynes my confidents as to the name of the author, for they would not listen to any proposal from an unknown Scottish bard, as such effusions have not of late been very fortunate. I flatter myself you will not think less of the caution, when I assure you your name smoothed all difficulties, as they are both readers of poetry, and no strangers to the "Local Attachment."

Believe me, dear Sir, I esteem myself honoured in the confidence you repose in me; and that I am very much your faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XI.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford*, 29 *Feb.* 1812.

Your favour, and soon after your poem, reached me here when I was busy in planting, ditching, and fencing a kingdom, like that of Virgil's Melibæus, of about one hundred acres. I immediately sent your poem to Ballantyne, without the least intimation whence it comes. But I greatly doubt his venturing on the publication, nor can I much urge him to it. The disputes of the Huttonians and Wernerians, though they occasioned, it is said, the damning of a tragedy in Edinburgh last month, have not agitated our northern Athens in any degree like the disputes between the Bellonians and Lancastrians. The Bishop of Meath, some time a resident with us, preached against the Lancastrian system in our Episcopal chapel.

The Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, a Scottish Baronet, and leader of the stricter sect of the Presbyterians, replied in a thundering discourse of an hour and a half in length. Now, every body being engaged on one side or the other, I believe no one will care to bring forth a poem which laughs at both. As for me, upon whom the suspicion of authorship would probably attach, I say with Mrs. Quickly, "I will never put my finger in the fire, and need not! indeed no, la!" I shall be in Edinburgh in the course of a week, and learn the publishers' determination; and if it be as I anticipate, I will find means to return the MS. safely under an office frank.

I like the poetry very much, and much of the sentiment also, being distinctly of opinion that the actual power of reading, whether English or Latin or Greek, acquired at school, is of little consequence compared to the habits of discipline and attention ne-

cessarily acquired in the course of regular study. I fear many of the short-hand acquisitions will be found "in fancy ripe, in reason rotten." After all, however, this applies chiefly to the easier and higher classes; for, as to the lower, we are to consider the saving of time in learning as the means of teaching many who otherwise would not learn at all. So I quietly subscribe to both schools, and give my name to neither. I trust the *charlatanism* of both systems will subside into something useful. I have no good opinion of either of the champions. Lancaster is a mountebank; and there is a certain lawsuit depending in our courts here between Dr. Bell and his wife, which puts him in a very questionable point of view.

Believe me, dear Sir, yours ever truly,

W. Scott.

"The Deserted Village-School," a poem, was printed with the following mottoes:

"The Athenians, we know, in the decline of their state, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. In this respect, we fall but little short of that refined people. Hence all those corruptions in literature: hence all those discoveries in the education of youth." (Bishop Porteus.)

"Plus habet ostentationis quam operis. (Quintilian.)

"Cito prudentes, cito omnis officii capaces et curiosi." (Seneca.)

at Edinburgh, by James Ballantyne and Co., for John Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London; in 1812. P.

LETTER XII.

TO THE REV. MR. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford*, 10 *Sept.* 1812.

Nothing but my present residence being so distant from the Ballantynes, prevented my immediately satisfying you on the subject of the "Minstrel." I have been led from day to day to expect one or both of them

here, but did not see them till a few days since. I find from the state of my own transactions with them, that they are not disposed in the present state of mercantile credit, to publish any thing for which they are not under actual engagements. The facility of commercial discounts has been narrowed from *nine* and *ten* to *three* months, which of course obliges all prudent adventurers who have not the means of extending their capital, to meet the inconvenience by retrenching their trade. To this, therefore, the Muse must give way for the present, so far at least as Edinburgh is concerned. This is the real state of the case; otherwise, independent of the merit of the performance itself, your name alone would have been sufficient to recommend any thing to a publisher in Scotland. But at present there is nothing to be done. I have a poem on the stocks myself; but shall find some difficulty in getting it launched, at least in the way I

expected, and must make considerable sacrifices to the pressure of the times.

I am busy here beautifying a farm which nothing but the influence of *Local Attachment* could greatly recommend, unless a Christian wished to practise at once the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, for it requires the whole to judge of it favourably, its present state being altogether unpromising. It has, however, about a mile of Tweedside, and that is a sufficient recommendation to a Borderer. I am delighted to hear of the good success of Drs. Carlyon and Collins, who struck me as young men of great promise, and likely to make a good figure in life.

Adieu, my dear Sir. So soon as I go to Edinburgh, which will be next month or the beginning of November at furthest, I will transmit to you the MS. Should you wish to have it sooner, and will direct to Messrs. Ballantyne's, they will attend to your instructions.

Believe me, my dear Sir, very much your faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 16 *Nov.* 1812.

I regret most extremely that my absence from Edinburgh should have occasioned the delay of which you most justly complain, but which, not having been here for six months, I had it not in my power to prevent. I only returned the day before yesterday, and have been since engaged in official attendance on the election of our Scottish Peers, where we are returning officers. I will not delay a moment returning the MS. As I have no criticism to offer, which can, in the slightest degree, affect your feelings, I can have no hesitation to state the only circum-

stance which, I think, may possibly interfere with the popularity of "The Minstrel;" which is, its being founded upon the plan of another poet, which has been long before the public in the shape of a fragment. In reading a fragment, the mind naturally forms some sketch of its probable conclusion, and is more or less displeased, however unreasonably, with a conclusion which shocks and departs from its own preconceptions; and it is to this feeling that I am tempted to ascribe the failure of almost all attempts, which I can recollect, to continue a well-known poem or story. But, although this is, in my opinion, a radical objection to the plan you have adopted, yet your plan is carried on with so much poetical spirit and talent, that it would never have weighed with me in advising that the publication of the poem should be delayed; and, had matters stood with my friendly booksellers as they did this time twelvemonth, I am certain they

would have considered the adventure as a very favourable speculation. But the state of the commercial world, in every branch, is at present such as necessarily compels all prudent persons rather to get rid of the stock now on their hands, than to make additions to it even under the most favourable circumstances.

I have not seen the bibliopolists since I came to town, but will call in upon them to-day, to get your valuable manuscript, and to enquire into the progress of the "Village School."

Ballantyne's.

On coming here, I find the manuscript has been sent, which I regret, as I would certainly have gone over it with more attention than in my former cursory view.

I send the "Lay" to ballast this scrawl, and am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford, 2 Aug.* 1813.

Your letter has had a most weary dance after me through the North of England, where I have been rambling a good while; and, being disappointed in an intended visit to my friend Morris at Rokeby, all my letters miscarried for a season, being sent to his charge. Assuredly I will have the greatest pleasure in reading any thing of yours, and recommending it to the booksellers.

I trust this glorious news from Spain may eventually lead this Disturber of Europe to think of offering fair and honourable terms of peace, which would be as advantageous, I am convinced, for the literary as for the commercial public.

I will not omit any opportunity of doing what you wish; but Jeffrey and Gifford are

the only managers of these reviews, and are, like other great men, sufficiently arbitrary in their admission or rejection of articles.

My present address is "Abbotsford, Melrose," where I have settled myself in a little cottage, with about one hundred acres of land, as my "hoc erat in votis." We have the living fountain and the silver Tweed; but, alas! the groves are yet to rise.

Believe me, dear Sir, with sincere regard, your faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XV.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 3 *April*, 1814.

Immediately upon coming to town, I enquired after your papers, having previously done so by letter, and had the satisfaction to

learn that they had been sent to your address in London, and arrived safe. I have been considering the subject you propose for historical composition. It is certainly a desideratum in Scottish story, and I should be delighted to see it in your hands; but there is a woeful deficiency of materials. Boethius is altogether fabulous; and to follow him, as Buchanan has done, would only be adding to exploded error. Something might be gleaned from the English Chronicles, and a good deal from old Wintown and Barlowe. But I apprehend the only way to get at something like historical fact, would be to consult the few records which remain of that early period. These, indeed, are very few, have suffered much, and are not over and above legible. They consist of charters, and of various rolls and chamberlains' accompts, kept by our monarchs and their officers of state. If these were carefully examined, I am convinced much fable might be corrected

by the application of dates to facts, and perhaps some important truths recovered. Lord Thurles was the first who introduced accuracy into Scottish history. All who precede him may be considered as absolutely legendary. There is, therefore, a fair field for patient and persevering research and industry, and I have not the least doubt that, should you think so seriously of the task as to make Edinburgh your residence for the time necessary to collect these scattered materials, every facility of access will be afforded you. Indeed, my own official situation, which is collaterally connected with that of the Lord Register, puts something in my power; and Mr. Thomson, the Deputy Register, is a man of most liberal disposition and great historical knowledge. But I fear that, without a residence of many months in this place, very little could be done; and I should rejoice to think this were possible for you, as I should then have the pleasure to improve our epis-

tolary into personal acquaintance. But I doubt whether your other avocations will permit your making so great a sacrifice to your literary pursuits.

I take the liberty to send you a copy of a poem I lately published, but which was originally in rather a cumbrous form to be transmitted so many hundred miles.

Believe me, dear Sir, yours very truly and respectfully,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 10 *July*, 1814.

I wrote to you in winter upon the subject of your curious and valuable MS. which I think fully equal to any which you have yet written; as that letter did not reach you, I will mention its principal points, in the par-

cel consisting of the MS. itself, which I will return to-morrow. Your poem, with some material papers of my own, has been for some months in a situation rather secure than accessible; for, in the hurry attending my removal from one house in the country to another, my furniture was deposited in a hay-loft; and at the bottom of a heap of old arms, helmets, and broad-swords, fenced in with a cheveux-de-frise of chairs, tables, and bed-posts, stood a small bureau, containing all my own papers and your beautiful poem. I could not trust the key of this treasure-chest to any one but myself, and I only got my matters a little arranged last week, when I recovered your verses, and brought them to town with me.

I wish you joy of the marvellous conclusion of the strange and terrible drama which our eyes have seen opened, and I trust finally closed, upon the grand stage of Europe. I used to be fond of war when I was

a younger man, and longed heartily to be a soldier; but now I think there is no prayer in the service with which I could close more earnestly, than "Send peace in our time, good Lord."

I send this under Mr. Davies Giddy's cover, and conclude hastily that I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, Sept.* 1814.

Baal is neither dead nor sleeping; he had only gone a journey, which was likely to have landed him on the coast of Cornwall, and near your door, in which case I should have had the honour to have made your personal acquaintance. I have been engaged for these two months last upon a pleasure-

voyage with some friends. We had a good light cutter, well fitted up and manned, belonging to the service of the Northern Lighthouses, of which department my friends are Commissioners. We therefore lived much at our ease; and had our motions as much under our own command, as winds and waves would permit. We visited the Shetland and Orkney Isles, and rounding the island by Cape Wrath, wandered for some time among the Hebrides; then went to the Irish coast, and viewed the celebrated Giant's Causeway, and would have pursued our voyage Heaven knows how far, but that the American privateers were a little too near us, and the risk of falling in with them cut short our cruise; otherwise I might have landed upon the ancient shores of Corinæus, and made the "Fair Isabel" my introduction to the Bard of the West. I now return the MS. which I grieve I have detained so long. I hope, however, there will be no delay in

getting it printed by January, which is, I believe, the earliest approved publishing season. I believe I shall make another adventure myself about the same time, upon a subject of Scottish history; I have called my work the "Lord of the Isles." The greater part has been long written, but I am stupid at drawing ideal scenery, and waited until I should have a good opportunity to visit, or rather to re-visit, the Hebrides, where the scene is partly laid.

On my return, I was much shocked by finding I had lost my amiable and constant friend, the Duchess of Buccleuch—a calamity of unspeakable consequence to her family, her friends, and the country at large. She was at once an example to those of her own rank, and a protectress of virtue and merit in those whom fortune had placed under her. My long intimacy in the family enabled me to observe some instances of her judgment and beneficence, which I now can

hardly recollect without tears. I thought to have inscribed to her the work at which I was labouring; but, alas! it will now only record my severe pain and peculiar share in a grief which is almost national. I beg pardon for intruding this melancholy subject upon you, but it will be long uppermost in the thoughts of those who shared the friendship of this lovely and lamented woman.

Believe me, my dear friend, ever most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.

"The Fair Isabel."

To a critic in the Augustan Review (a Review of short duration, I believe) I am obliged for his courteous attention to my "Fair Isabel." His gallantry to my heroine is sufficiently discoverable in this outline of the poem.

"Sir Richard Edgcumbe, father of Isabel, having lost his lady, sets off from Cotehele, in obedience to the mandate of his bigot queen, to combat the Protestant rebels under Trevanion, leaving the young Isabel to the care of her sister (Mawd),—a prioress (Jacqueline), who had taken refuge in the castle on the dissolution of her nunnery—and a

monk (father Nicholas); all distinguished, as appears in the sequel, by the worst crimes that too commonly disgraced those lazy drones who battened on the hive of Roman Catholic credulity, in the most splendid days of papistical usurpation. Isabel, wandering in the wood of Cotehele, is accosted by a gipsey, in whom she recognizes her lover, Edward Trevanion, who had been left, when an orphan, to the care of his uncle, Sir Richard Edgcumbe; but the latter, jealous of the growing attachment between the young 'heretic' and his daughter, had sent him abroad. From the relation of his adventures, given by the youth, it appears that on his return from France he found Sir Richard and Trevanion, at the head of their respective forces, engaged in battle; the various turns of which he is describing—when his narrative is interrupted by several strange songs, in the Oriental style, and some mysterious appearances: on which the lovers hastily part. The unseasonable minstrel is discovered to be Erisey, a youth strongly tinctured with the superstitions of the Catholic church, and who, with many others, on the banishment of Edward, had aspired to the hand of Isabel. Erisey, having obtained an inadvertent promise from Isabel, on condition of his performing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, had now returned from his travels to claim its fulfilment. He is accompanied by Callimachi,

a young Greek, who is also smitten by the charms of Isabel. The fair heroine, refusing either to marry Erisey, to give up Trevanion, or to go to a nunnery on the continent—notwithstanding the threats of the prioress and the monk—is secretly conveyed to the vault of her mother, there to be immured alive. Callimachi, interposing in her behalf, is assassinated by the priest; who, with his accomplices, deceives Sir Richard, by informing him that his daughter is drowned in the Tamar. The knight institutes a search for the body, and whilst the prioress is relating the circumstances of the pretended accident, a boat passes on the river below, filled with 'shadowy figures,' who intimate darkly, in songs, the guilt of the prioress and Mawd; upon which these abandoned characters, stung with shame and despair, clasp each other, leap over the precipice, and perish in the flood below. It subsequently appears that the 'ancient bard' of the house of Cotehele, having overheard a part of the conversation of the prioress and the monk relative to Isabel, had repaired, by a private and unobserved way, to the family vault, which lay near the sea, for the purpose of counteracting their intentions. There he found the Lady Alice awaking from a trance, in which she had been prematurely interred; and had scarcely time to afford her the assistance necessary to the recovery of animation, when Isabel was let down

into the vault. The party escaped in a boat belonging to William (the lover of Jesse, Isabel's confidante), and were conveyed to Mount Edgcumbe, whither Sir Richard repairs. Several interesting explanations ensue; and poetical justice is done to all parties, by the death of the priest,—by the discovery that Mawd was the daughter of the prioress, and not of Lady Edgcumbe (an exchange of children having been accomplished through the subtlety of the former),—by the recovery of the real daughter,—the reconciliation of Sir Richard and Trevanion,—the union of Isabel and Edward, and of William and Jesse,—and the festivities of Christmas, observed according to the ancient rites of English hospitality, and to which the wonderful adventures of the preceding days could not fail to give a peculiar zest.

"Such is the ground-work on which Mr. Polwhele has raised the superstructure of his romance. It abounds with incidents, many of which are peculiarly striking, and are told in a style that cannot fail to add to their dramatic effect, as will be seen from the following quotations:

"Isabel, with hurried gaze
Through the wreathed window high,
Beheld the thin clouds scattering fly
Across the ruffled sky,

And, through their fleecy fragments white,
A smoky, fiery light;
When, quick as vision, trail'd afar,
And, shooting to the earth its blaze,
Burst into myriad sparks, a star.

" ' Hark to the voices in the blast !
' See—see that spirit—thy sire—it pass'd
' On the careering cloud !
' It is his winding-sheet ! his shroud !'
She thought she saw a lifted cowl;
She thought she saw a demon-scowl !
' What means,' (she cried) ' for mercy say !'—
A gleamy figure sank away.' " p. 62, 63.

" Again :

" She stopp'd and trembled. And he cried—
' Thy sire is safe ! I joy to say—
' Though yester was a bloody day !'
When his gipsey-dress half flung aside,
High youth appear'd in manly pride.
And a radiance from the sun, aslant
Through sprays that veil'd the sylvan haunt,
Was, on his brow, a lustrous streak,
A blush on his brown glowing cheek,
And (gradual beauty to unfold)
On his dark eye-lash, a shadowy ray,
That languish'd, as in am'rous play,
And on his bright hair, fluid gold.

But, as the breeze, his locks between,
Fann'd the left temple's azure vein,
The sun-beam touch'd a recent scar,
Disclos'd amidst the parted hair." p. 112, 113.

"Some of the delineations from nature are very beautiful; as in the following lines:

"Arising in the moody blast,
The sleety storm had well-nigh pass'd
(Ere the struggling day's first gleam)
Cotehele's old tow'rs and Tamar stream.
And now a few snow-feathers light
Twinkled in the rear of night.
Still was the sullen hour and dark:
The castle-roof no eye could mark,
Nor window-shaft, nor portal gray,
Nor oaken branch, nor ashen spray;
When, suddenly, the bulwark'd wall,
Rampires, portcullis, windows, all,
And hollows down the steep wood-side,
And rocks amidst the foamy tide,
The oak's broad crest, and far below
Its cavern'd trunk that held the snow;
The dusky fir, the berried ash—
Discover'd in one azure flash,
No sooner shone
Than they were gone
In the elemental crash." p. 24.

"From the preceding extracts, our readers will

perceive that 'The Fair Isabel' is a poem not without merit. Passages might be cited from it equal to any in Scott's poems. Scott, however, appears to have laboured diligently to give all his lines the highest degree of polish of which they were susceptible: in Mr. Polwhele's poem, instances of inattention or haste are continually occurring. The following lines, amongst others, ought to be carefully revised:

"Sail'd down the wood, and brush'd the ice-drops."
"As now a lone star, the last left."

(See Augustan Review for Sept. 1816.)

P.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford*, 4 *Nov.* 1815.

I have been a long and distant wanderer from home; and, though I reached this cottage six weeks ago, I only got "Isabel" yesterday. She was in my house at

Castle Street, in possession of an old housekeeper; who, knowing perhaps from youthful experience the dangers which attend young ladies on their travels, kept her with some other captives until my wife, going to town to attend a grand musical festival, made a general jail delivery, and sent among many, but none so welcome packets, the fair maiden of Cotehele. What I liked so much in manuscript, gained of course by being made more legible; and, did it rest with me, would rank "Isabel" with "Local Attachment," that is with one of the poems of modern times which has afforded me the most sincere pleasure.

I will not fail to put into the hands of Mr. Jeffrey the copy you have sent for him, and to request him to read it with attention. The rest must depend on his own taste. But I will deliver the work with my own hand. No time is yet lost; for Mr. Jeffrey, like myself and other gaping sawnies, has

for some time been in France. I am ignorant if he be yet returned; but at any rate the sitting of the courts, which calls me from my oaks of a fathom's growth, will bring him also to Edinburgh.

Allow me to inclose you a small poem, on the greatest of all events which has dignified our eventful time. I was gradually induced to commit myself upon this very perilous ground, first by wishing to give something to the fund more handsome than usual, for the poor fellows and their relatives who suffered, and then from a sort of pride which was unwilling to retreat from a peril once encountered. In you the verses will find a lenient critic; for you can well appreciate the difficulty of a theme unmanageable in proportion to its magnificence, and rendered still more difficult in proportion to its business. It is done and dared, however, and there let it pass, *cum cæteris erroribus*,

My stay in France, which was pretty long for a flying visit, has still more endeared my own country, and the manly rectitude of its morals and simplicity of its habits.

Adieu, my dear Sir. I hardly hope the enclosed will prove an excuse for some delay in correspondence; but under an accumulation of business both personal and official, and the natural disposition to lounge with my family when I had not seen them for several weeks, and with the absence of the Maid of Cotehele, daily expected, it may go some length to make my apology. Trusting to your experienced goodness, I venture as usual to subscribe myself, my dear Sir, very much your obliged and faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

The beautiful verses to Sir Hussey Vivian also arrived during my Gallick tour, and in fact reached me only two or three days before "Isabel."

"Sir Hussey Vivian."

In this letter, Sir W. Scott is pleased "to be delighted" with my poetical tribute to Sir Hussey Vivian; which "arrived during his Gallic tour."

In reference to these verses, I am very glad to have an opportunity of adverting to some incidents in the life of Sir Hussey, which cannot be noticed with indifference. They were communicated to me by Sir Hussey himself; too late for insertion in the volumes of the "Cornish Worthies." To the Commander of the Forces in Ireland, Cornwall looks up with honest pride; and every true Briton will rejoice in the following memoir:

"I was born," says Sir Hussey, "28th July, 1775. In 1783 I went to Truro grammar-school, under Dr. Cardew; where I remained nine months, and from thence was sent to Lostwithiel grammar-school, under Dr. M'Gilvray. I remained there four years, and then went to Harrow on the Hill, of which school Dr. Drury was then master. At Harrow I remained until Easter, 1791; when I was entered at Exeter College, Oxford. I kept two terms, and then went to France, where I remained until the spring of 1792, learning the language. I then returned to my father, who, flattering himself that I might tread in the steps of my great uncle, Mr. Richard Hussey (who was very eminent as a counsel, and the great friend of Pratt

and Dunning, and who no doubt, had he lived, would have obtained an equally high situation in the country—(having, at an early age, become Attorney-general to the Queen), wished me to go to the bar; and, as I was at this time very young, he sent me to his particular friend, Mr. Jonathan Elford, a most excellent man, and very able solicitor and conveyancer, to study the law, prior to my entering the Middle Temple, which I was destined to do. But Mr. Elford residing at Plymouth Dock, threw me into acquaintance with several officers of the army, and my disposition prompting me to follow the steps of my other great-uncle, Colonel Hussey, who was killed with Wolfe on the heights of Abraham, I was, in 1793, appointed to an ensigncy in the 20th regt. of infantry; and shortly after, to a lieutenancy in the 54th, in which regiment I immediately embarked, on an expedition under the command of Sir C. Grey, for the West Indies. But our destination was fortunately changed, and we were sent, with five other regiments, to the relief of Newport, then threatened by the French. The regiment was shortly after placed in the army under the command of the Earl of Moira, destined to create a diversion on the coast of France, and assist the Vendeans. In 1794 I was appointed to a company in the 28th regiment, belonging to the same army, and in June the whole force under the orders of Lord Moira,

disembarked at Ostend, and joined the Duke of York's army. During this campaign, I was in all the affairs that took place between the French and British; and in one, during the retreat of the army which occurred at Geldermalsem, the 28th regiment suffered severely, and gained great credit. In 1795 the British army returned to England; and I then embarked with my regiment for the West Indies, forming part of the army under Sir Ralph Abercrombie. We were nine weeks at sea, attempting the passage in the fleet commanded by Sir Hugh Christian; and the transport, in which I was, returned with that part of the fleet driven back. The regiment was then sent to Gibraltar, where I remained with it from 1796 to 1798, when I exchanged into the 7th Light Dragoons. In 1799 that regiment formed part of the expedition to the Helder, and I was engaged in every action that took place there, with the exception of the landing. After this I continued in the 7th, quartered in England, (in 1803 having obtained the rank of Major, and in 1804 that of Lieut.-Colonel, with the command of the regiment,) until 1808, when I embarked with my regiment on the expedition under the orders of Sir John Moore, for the coast of Spain, and landed at Corunna. I was engaged in most of the affairs of cavalry that took place during that campaign; and in the retreat, the regiment under my command formed the rear-guard from Astorga to Corunna;

and during that retreat I personally, accompanied only by an Adjutant-Corporal, collected about 600 stragglers of the infantry that were attacked by a body of French cavalry, formed them, and beat off the enemy, for which I received Sir G. Paget's (who witnessed it) and Sir John Moore's thanks. In 1810 my regiment, having recruited its losses in the Corunna campaign, was sent to Ireland, where it continued until the Spring of 1813, when it returned to England; and in the August of that year landed at Bilbao, and joined the Duke of Wellington's army. I had, in 1812, been appointed aide-de-camp to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, with the rank of Colonel in the army; and in the same year also, I had the further honour of being appointed one of his Royal Highness's equerries. Shortly after my arrival with the Duke of Wellington's army, I was appointed a Colonel on the staff, and to the command of a brigade of cavalry; in this command I was engaged in the battle of Orthes, and in most of the affairs of cavalry that took place towards the end of the campaign of 1813; and in that of 1814, at Thoulouse, I was severely wounded, at the head of the 18th Hussars, in remembrance of which occasion the Duke of Wellington was pleased to speak of me in the following very flattering terms: 'The 18th Hussars, under the immediate command of Colonel Vivian, had an opportunity of making a most gallant attack

upon a superior body of the enemy's cavalry, which they drove through the village of Croix d'Orade, and took about 100 prisoners, and gave us possession of an important bridge over the river Eis, by which it was necessary to pass in order to attack the enemy's position. Colonel Vivian was unfortunately wounded upon this occasion, and I am afraid I shall lose the benefit of his assistance for some time.'

"The 18th Hussars presented me with a sword, on which is the following inscription: 'The officers of the 18th Hussars express by this token, their regard for, and confidence in, Major-General Richard Hussey Vivian, who was wounded at the head of their regiment;' which sword was sent to me with a very flattering and complimentary letter.*

"In 1814, on the peace, I returned with the army to England, and was raised to the rank of Major-General. Soon after I was appointed to the command of the Sussex district, and stationed at Brighton. On the occasion of my quitting the 7th, that regiment presented me with a piece of plate of the value of 250 guineas, on which is the following inscription:

* "I have no copy of this letter; it was sent to my poor father, and, if I mistake not, published in one of the Truro papers at the time."

'Presented by the officers of the 7th Queen's own Hussars to Major-General Sir Richard Hussey Vivian, as a mark of their regard and esteem, and a memorial of their respect for the services he had rendered that regiment during the ten years he commanded it. August 1, 1814.'

"In 1815, on the extension of the Order of the Bath, I was created a Knight Commander; and I was the first Major-General sent, in command of a brigade of cavalry, to join the army assembling at Brussels, on the return of Napoleon to France. I covered with my brigade the retreat of the left of the British from Quatre Bras; and in the battle of Waterloo, I, having moved from the left, to reinforce the right centre, towards the end of the day, arrived at the moment Buonaparte made his last attack, in which the brigade suffered severely. In the advance of the army it fell to my lot, with my brigade, to lead; and the charge I made contributed most materially, if not altogether, to the total dispersion of that part of the French army which had formed to cover their retreat.* The whole of the

* In a "description of that part of the Battle of Waterloo, following the repulse of the last attack of the French, with the death of Major the Hon. F. Howard," our countryman is thus happily characterised:

"Who, with a hero's port and lofty form,
With waving sabre, onward guides the storm,

French writers, who have given an account of the battle,* invariably attribute it to this attack. From Waterloo to Paris my brigade had, during the whole march, the advanced guard of the British army. When, after the restoration of Louis XVIII. an allied force was left in occupation of part of France, the brigade under my command

> While thro' the tangled corn and yielding clay,
> His spurs incessant urge his panting grey ?†
> 'Tis VIVIAN, pride of old Cornubia's hills,
> His veins the untainted blood of Britons fills.
> Him follows close a MANNERS, glorious name,
> In whom a Granby's soul aspires to fame.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> ' Front, form the line,' cries Vivian—still its course
> The head maintained : the rear, with headlong force,
> Speeds at the word, till troops with troops combine,
> And each firm squadron forms the serried line."

The elegant little poem from which I have made this extract, was written by Colonel Taylor, of the 10th Hussars. It never, I believe, was printed.

* "On the occasion of the Battle of Waterloo, I received the orders of Knight of Maria Theresa from the Emperor of Austria, of St. Wladomir from the Emperor of Russia, and of Hanover from the Prince Regent."

† Sir Hussey Vivian had mounted a troop horse of the 10th, nearly milk-white.

formed part of it, and during the three years I commanded in Picardy.

"On the return of the army in 1818, for the first time for three-and-twenty years, I was unemployed. Shortly after this, on the reduction of the British army, the 18th regiment of Hussars, which had formed part of my brigade, both in the Peninsula and at Waterloo; was reduced, and this regiment, as a mark of their attachment, paid me a most flattering compliment by presenting me with a silver trumpet, that had been purchased for the trumpet-major of the regiment, out of part of the proceeds of the money obtained for horses of the French cavalry, captured at Waterloo, on which are the following inscriptions:

1st. 'Purchased by the desire of the soldiers of the 18th Hussars, out of part of the prize money arising out of the sale of horses captured from the enemy by the brigade under the command of Major-General Sir Hussey Vivian, in the Battle of Waterloo, 18 June 1815.'*

2nd. 'On the 10th of September 1821, the day

* "Each regiment of my brigade, viz. 10th Hussars and 18th Hussars British, and 1st Hussars Hanoverian, purchased a silver trumpet with the prize money, to be kept in the regiments in remembrance of this great victory."

on which the 18th Hussars was disbanded, this trumpet was presented to Major-General Sir Richard Hussey Vivian, K.C.B. &c. Having commanded them upon many glorious occasions they offer to him this memorial of the last victory to which it was their good fortune to be led by him, as an assurance that while he gained their admiration as a soldier, he secured their lasting and unfeigned esteem as a friend, and in the hope of living in his recollection and estimation when they shall have ceased to exist as a corps.'

"In the year 1819 I was called from my retirement and sent in command to Newcastle on Tyne, in consequence of some disturbances that had taken place in that part of the country; from thence I was shortly sent on to Glasgow, where serious riots were apprehended. In 1820, on the death of George the Third, I was elected to Parliament for my native town, which I represented until the dissolution in 1825. I was afterwards returned for Windsor, for which borough I continued to sit until the very distressing state of Lady Vivian's health, which prevented my attending my duty, and its having been intimated to me that I was destined to command the army in Ireland, occasioned my resigning my seat. On the accession of William IV. to the throne, he did me the honour to name me one of the Grooms of His Majesty's Bed-

chamber; and on my being appointed to the command in Ireland he was pleased to create me a Grand Cross of the Royal Hanoverian order of Guelph.

"During the time I was in Parliament I constantly spoke on all military subjects, and sometimes on others, and I acquired more credit than I deserved on one or two occasions when so doing; especially on the speech I made on the question of Catholic Emancipation, and on the distress of the country in 1830: in the former of which I foretold O'Connell's present course, and almost pointed out my line of conduct in the situation I now fill, and in the latter clearly anticipated the outrages which took place in the end of that year.

"Thus, my dear Sir, I have given you, in reply to your letter, a concise and, I believe, very faithful history of my life. I omitted, however, to state that in 1804 I married Eliza, the daughter of Philip Champion Crespigny, Esq. of Aldborough, Suffolk, which borough was his property, and for which he and one of his sons had sat for many years. Mr. C. was a descendant of a distinguished family of Normandy, and became a refugee in this country, with many others, at the time of the Edict of Nantes.

"*Royal Hospital, Dublin,* HUSSEY VIVIAN."
March 9, 1832.

"P.S. I have omitted to mention a circumstance very honourable and flattering to me; which is, that immediately before I came to this country I was offered the appointment of Secretary at War, but I preferred pursuing the line of my profession."

LETTER XIX.

TO THE REV. MR. POLWHELE.

DEAR SIR, 1816.

I am very much flattered indeed by your obliging letter, and the praises which it contains, which, coming from you, are very valuable. I did not forget that I had some title to request your acceptance of a copy; but the booksellers I suppose thought my list of my friends too numerous, as they curtailed it in one or two instances. Truly glad am I, that you are so kind as to give me an opportunity to make amends for their negligence; and the first opportunity that occurs to send such a thing to London, I

will beg your acceptance of a copy somewhat superior to those generally sold to the public.

I will not fail to persecute Messrs. Cadell and Davies, until they are pleased to obey your obliging order. Perhaps I may dun them in person, as I believe I shall be in London in the course of a week or two; my motions, however, are rather uncertain. It would give me great pleasure were I to have any hope of seeing you while in town. I cannot close my letter without inquiring after Mr. Carlyon, whom I met very accidentally on the Banks of the Tweed, and was much pleased with. There is another friend of mine at present in Cornwall, the Rev. Mr. Marriot, lately tutor to young Lord Scott, my little chieftain; but obliged to leave a situation equally eligible and pleasant, and where he had a friend in every member of the family, from a tendency to pulmonary complaints. Should you meet him, may I hope you will give him a minstrel greeting

for my sake; but, if he happens to be already known to you, I am sure further introduction will be unnecessary.

The Editor of the Edinburgh Review is my particular friend; but he and I often differ in points of criticism. If I find he views your poems with the same eye that I have done for many years, I am sure he will give them an honourable niche in his temple of Fame, or rather his theatre of Anatomy. I have myself long ceased to write in a work, the political sentiments of which do by no means correspond with mine; indeed, I never did touch upon any poetical productions, conscious that either my praise or censure might be easily misconstrued. The articles I used sometimes to furnish had chiefly relation to antiquities.

Most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XX.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, NEWLYN VICARAGE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford*, 6 *Sept.* 1825.

I am so dreadful a correspondent that with those I esteem most highly, and certainly Mr. Polwhele ranks high among them, I very often am obliged to declare a bankruptcy in the way of correspondence, rather than make those small payments, which would at least show a sense of the debt if they deal little towards satisfaction. I am sure you could not wish to publish any of my letters, containing in them matter not fit for the public eye. At the same time, bearing no recollection of the subjects at this distance of time, I should be glad to have an opportunity of looking them over before publication, as they may possibly regard topics on which my more mature age may have induced me to change my mind, or

perhaps opinions hastily and inaccurately expressed in the confidence of private correspondence. I will be therefore greatly obliged to you if you would have the goodness to transmit me the letters under the cover of Mr. Croker, of the Admiralty, who if the parcel is addressed to him will forward them safely to me. I have little reason to suppose that there will be any cause to refuse compliance with your wishes, and certainly shall be very little disposed to decline compliance with any thing you can wish.

I have to thank you, amongst other favours, for a copy of Sermons, which from the nature of the subjects are interesting and curious, though some of them may, I suppose, be considered as *conciones ad clerum*, rather than *ad populum*, from the abstruse disquisitions into which they conduct the reader.

I am writing in the midst of moor-fowl shooters and tourists, which occasions my

hastening to subscribe myself, dear Sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, NEWLYN VICARAGE.

DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford*, 6 *Oct.* 1825.

I return the enclosed, and can have no possible objection to your disposing of them as you please.* I would, however, submit to you that the greater part of them are too frivolous to interest the public; and I hope you will be so good as to mention that I have consented to your wish merely because it was your wish, and without any idea on my part, that what was written for your own eye deserved a more extensive circulation.

I am, with best wishes, always, dear Sir, very truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

* The preceding correspondence.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE REV. R. POLWHELE, POLWHELE, TRURO.

MY DEAR SIR, *Abbotsford*, 17 *April*, 1829.

I received your letter, and will be most happy in placing your Memoir of Whitaker on my shelves, in addition to your other valuable works. I have far less interest in the literary circles in Scotland than you may imagine; but if I can be of service to you it will make me happy. I made several enquiries to know whether I could find the means of aiding your very natural wish on behalf of your young relatives; but Scotland is in every respect a trading country, and our sons are sent off to the Colonies as our black cattle to England, and every outlet that a Scotsman has command of is more than choked with long-legged red-haired cousins, so I hope you have access to better interest than mine; though you should be

welcome to it if I possessed any, being my dear friend, ever yours most faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT.

"Life of Whitaker." Sir Walter Scott was on the Continent, never "to return *himself* again," when that "Life," and the "Cornish Worthies," and the "Rural Rector," were destined for his library. I am certain he would have liked the preface to the "Rural Rector." The greater part of the book is but an illustration and exemplification of the opinions and characters, political and religious, which in the preface are maintained or exhibited.

In several letters to Sir Walter Scott, respecting the March of Intellect, my sentiments were substantially the same as I have expressed in these volumes. The following passage embodies the substance of an after-dinner conversation, carried on between a sceptic and the Rural Rector:

"There was something extremely restless in the disposition of Raymond. He had religious doubts continually haunting him; in truth, he was a sceptic. To superficial observers he was lively and gay; but he had not a cheerful heart. His smile was like a gleam of sunshine through a cloud of the winter; and frequently in his laugh there was bitterness. No sooner

was the dessert set in order, and the servants gone, than he began to ply the Rector with his questions, not in a strain of impertinence, as her ladyship had done at the churching interview, but with an air of diffidence or deference.

"From a desire by communication to relieve an uneasy mind, he could not even wait for the withdrawing of the ladies from the dining-room, but (as was his wont) abruptly introduced topics of the most serious nature, even before the Stretton burgesses had been recognised in the customary toasts, or the new Christian, just fresh from the font, had been commemorated. Speaking of some recent geological phenomena: 'How are they (said R.) to be reconciled with your Bible? What is the Mosaic account of the deluge?' 'Perhaps (said the Rector), if you candidly and deliberately compare that account, as you call it, with the late discoveries, you will be inclined to think, that these discoveries concur with the more obvious appearances of nature, in proving the truth of the Noachian history. The phenomena of a diluvian action, which are every where presented to us, are, in my opinion, perfectly unintelligible without recourse to a deluge exerting its ravages, at a period not more ancient than that announced in the book of Genesis. And 'mankind (says Cuvier) every where speak the same language with nature.' With respect to the human race, the conclusions deducible from geological reasoning appear in strict accordance with Revelation; since no human remains have been found,

except in beds of no remote antiquity. As to the time requisite for the formation of the secondary strata, (if we refuse to admit the existence of another order of things, previous to the scriptural) we might find, I think, a sufficient space in the interval between the creation and the deluge, as recorded by Moses. It seems, then, that instead of being hostile to the Mosaic history, the phenomena which you have adverted to, confirm it. And we are here providentially furnished with proofs of the truth of revelation. The Bible, in fact, is much more philosophical than is generally conceived, much more than the writings of Aristotle, or Plato, or any of the ancient philosophers. Who, of old time, for instance, ever considered water and air as convertible into each other; supposed to be unchangeable elements. Yet, acquainted as we now are with their constituent principles, we receive it as philosophically correct, that when God made the firmament of Heaven, the waters which were above the firmament, were, on chemical principles, divided from the waters which were under the firmament, to produce rain and dew, and the other phenomena of the atmosphere necessary to the existence of man. And is not Job philosophical to a degree of accuracy not to be expected, when he tells us that the 'earth hangeth upon nothing?' Was he ignorant of the laws of gravitation?"

"But the Scripture (said Raymond) speaks in a language not always in the strictest accordance with the Copernican system, such as "the sun went not

down for a whole day. What is your opinion of this passage?" "Why, that it is only the familiar language of the world. The Bible does not profess to *teach* men philosophy. And recollect yourself; does the most formal man of science blush to say; 'the sun rises, the sun sets?' My dear Sir! I think you cannot but allow, that our modern sophists are too apt to pride themselves on their own independent acquisitions. Conversant with second causes, they would exclude God from his works. Yet, notwithstanding all the novelties which are daily rising to observation as discoveries in natural philosophy, the most acute and experienced in science must confess, that the causes of numberless phenomena are still past finding out, and that the modes of their operation remain inexplicable. In his disclosure of the secrets of nature, the philosopher thinks he breaks through barriers 'strong as the adamantine doors!' It is here he sounds his trumpet of defiance. It is here the chemist boasts his original productions! But exhibiting substances as he may, in endless combinations, can he create an atom? This is a question which, exposing his feebleness, should teach him humility. And the circumstance, that in his discoveries, he has brought forward, unintentionally, proofs against himself, against his own infidelity, should show him what a blind creature he is, a mere instrument in the hands of that Providence which he affects to deny.'

"Raymond appeared confounded, but not convinced. His opponent was a priest. And to a priest he could

give no credit. ‘ Still (said he) the philosopher does not see himself such a blind creature groping in darkness. Who, of all our chemists, have dismissed their doubts in consequence of their discoveries, so strikingly confirmatory (as you suppose) of the truth of Revelation? Men of enlightened unbiassed minds cannot embrace your mysteries, cannot bring Revelation to the test of reason.” “ To the *argumentum ad hominem* (the Doctor observed) I seldom resort. But to our sceptical men of science, who vaunt a superiority of intellect, I would say, Christianity may boast in her train philosophers truly so called. She may enumerate disciples mighty in human literature, and high in Christian Faith, accurate and conclusive reasoners, modest and sincere believers! They are many, and have been often recounted. I shall remind you only of a Ray, a Derham, a Newton, a Locke, a Hale, a Boyle, an Addison, a Nelson, a Lyttelton. Are there any other names under Heaven that inspire sublimer notions of mental greatness? They are the names of men who brought Revelation to the test of reason. But they saw the limits of reason clearly and distinctly. They approached so far, and no further; for they approached with trembling! They plainly perceived the finger of God in the works of creation. On the boundaries of the world of spirits they paused; they stood firm; but they stood in faith and with fear! On those boundaries, which no earthly step hath passed, they stood; whereon rest ‘ clouds and thick darkness!’—beyond which are things that ‘ eye hath

not seen, nor ear heard'—beyond which are things which no mortal 'ever saw and lived'!" P.

LETTER XXIII.

TO FRANCIS DOUCE, F.S.A.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 9 *Feb.* 1808.

I have deferred from day to day returning you my best thanks for the kind and most acceptable token of your remembrance,* which I received about a fortnight since, and which, notwithstanding an unusual press of business, of various kinds, has been my companion for an hour or two every afternoon since. Every admirer of Shakespeare, and I hope that comprehends all that can read or hear reading, must be necessarily delighted with the profusion of curious and interesting illustration which your remarks contain.

* Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of Ancient Manners.

I meant to have offered the few remarks that occurred to me while I was going through your volumes, which would at least have shown the attention I had paid in the perusal; but I have never had a moment's time to accomplish my purpose. In particular, concerning the Fools of Shakespeare, a subject of so much curiosity, and which you have so much elucidated, it might be interesting to you to know, that fifty years ago there was hardly a great house in Scotland where there was not an *all-licensed* fool—half crazy and half knavish—many of whose *bon mots* are still recited and preserved. The late Duke of Argyle had a jester of this description, who stood at the sideboard among the servants, and was a great favourite, until he got into disgrace by rising up in the kirk before sermon, and proclaiming the bans of marriage between himself and my friend Lady Charlotte Campbell. So you see it is not so very long,

at least in this country, since led captains, pimps, and players have superseded the *roguish* clowns of Shakespeare. But all this, with any other *scantlings* of information which have occurred to me, I must now reserve till I have the pleasure of returning my thanks in person, which will probably be in the course of a few weeks, as I have some prospect of being called to London this spring.

In this hope, I am, dear Sir, your much obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

The Lady Charlotte Campbell, mentioned in this letter, is the same lady whose talents, in a similar walk of literature to that of the author of Waverley, have obtained for her a considerable share of celebrity. Having declined the hand of her first aspiring suitor, she was married in 1802 to John Campbell, Esq. of Shawfield, and secondly, in 1818, to the Rev. Edward Bury.

LETTER XXIV.

TO JOHN BOWYER NICHOLS, ESQ.

SIR, *Edinburgh*, 8 *Dec.* 1829.

I am honoured with your letter, and would feel happy to do any thing which could show my respect for the "Gentleman's Magazine," from which I have often derived, and continue to derive, a quantity of literary information not to be seen elsewhere; and my respect for the literary patriarchs, Messrs. Cave and Nichols, would lead me to the same wish, without the slightest desire to put the publishers to expense.

But at present I am so deeply and indispensably occupied by the necessity of bringing forward the Waverley books in due season, that it is impossible for me, within the time you propose, to supply you with any prefatory matter which could be of service to

the publication, or to which I would like to put my name.

I am greatly obliged to you for the curious memoir of Cave, and am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

This letter was the reply to an application which, at the suggestion of some friends of the "Gentleman's Magazine," had been made to Sir Walter Scott, to request him to write a preface on that publication arriving at the Hundredth Year of its existence.

LETTER XXV.

TO MR. HARDING, BOOKSELLER, LONDON.

The following letter will, perhaps, be familiar to almost every reader: but it is inserted here, with others upon similar subjects, not merely as another instance of Sir Walter Scott's encouragement to deserving literary undertakings, but to give to the just and noble sentiments which it contains, a less fugitive receptacle than, it is believed, they have hitherto obtained.

SIR, *Abbotsford, March 25*, 1828.

I am much obliged by your letter, requesting that I would express to you my sentiments respecting Mr. Lodge's splendid work, consisting of the Portraits of the most celebrated persons of English history, accompanied with memoirs of their lives. I was at first disposed to decline offering any opinion on the subject; not because I had the slightest doubt on my mind concerning the high value of the work, but because in expressing my sentiments I might be exposed to censure, as if attaching to my own judgment more importance than it could deserve. Mr. Lodge's work is, however, one of such vast consequence, that a person attached, as I have been for many years, to the study of history and antiquities, may, I think, in a case of this rare and peculiar kind, be justly blamed for refusing his opinion, if required, concerning a publication of such value and importance.

Mr. Lodge's talents as a historian and antiquary are well known to the public by his admirable collection of ancient letters and documents, entitled "Illustrations of British History," a book which I have very frequently consulted; and have almost always succeeded in finding out not only the information required, but collected a great deal more as I went in search of it. The present work presents the same talents and industry; the same patient powers of collecting information from the most obscure and hidden sources, and the same talent for selecting the facts which are the rarest and most interesting, and presenting them to the general reader in a luminous and concise manner.

It is impossible for me to conceive a work which ought to be more interesting to the present age than that which exhibits before our eyes our "fathers as they lived," accompanied with such memorials of their lives

and characters as enable us to compare their persons and countenances with their sentiments and actions.

I pretend to offer no opinion upon the value of the work in respect to art—my opinion on that subject is literally worth nothing in addition to that of the numerous judges of paramount authority which have already admitted its high merits. But I may presume to say, that this valuable and extended series of the Portraits of the Illustrious Dead, affords to every private gentleman, at a moderate expense, the interest attached to a large Gallery of British Portraits, on a plan more extensive than any collection which exists, and at the same time the essence of a curious library of historical, bibliographical, and antiquarian works. It is a work which, in regard to England, might deserve the noble motto rendered with such dignity by Dryden :

> "From hence the line of Alban fathers come,
> And the long glories of majestic Rome."

I will enlarge no more on the topic, because I am certain that it requires not the voice of an obscure individual to point out to the British public the merits of a collection which at once satisfies the imagination and the understanding, showing us by the pencil, how the most distinguished of our ancestors looked, moved, and dressed, and informs us by the pen how they thought, acted, lived, and died. I should, in any other case, have declined expressing an opinion in this public, and almost intrusive manner; but I feel that, when called upon to bear evidence in such a cause, it would be unmanly to decline appearing in court, although expressing an opinion to which, however just, my name can add but little weight.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MR. CHARLES TILT, BOOKSELLER, FLEET STREET, LONDON.

SIR, *May* 1830.

I have very ungraciously left unacknowledged your present of the Landscape Illustrations of Waverley. I pretend to no knowledge of Art; so my opinion ought to go for nothing. But I think they are very beautiful, and sincerely hope they will answer the purpose of the artists and publishers.

I remain, Sir, your obliged humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.

Of this a remarkably accurate fac-simile has been printed in lithography.

LETTER XXVII.

TO SAMUEL PARKER, ESQ. BRONZE WORKS, ARGYLL PLACE, LONDON.

SIR, *Edinburgh, 29th May.*

I would long ere now have answered your very obliging letter with the medals. That representing our Sovereign seems most beautifully executed, and is a striking resemblance. I have very little turn for imagining mottoes, it being long since I read the classics, which are the great storehouse of such things. I incline to think, that a figure or head of Neptune upon the reverse, with the motto round the exergue, "Tridens Neptuni sceptrum mundi." I think this would be better than any motto more personally addressed to the King himself than to his high kingly office. I cannot, of course, be a judge of the other medal; but such of my family as are with me think it is very like.

If there is any motto to be added, I should like the line :

" Bardorum citharas patrio qui reddidit Istro,"

because I am far more vain of having been able to fix some share of public attention upon the ancient poetry and manners of my country, than of any original efforts which I have been able to make in literature.

I beg you will excuse the delay which has taken place. Your obliging communication, with the packet which accompanied it, travelled from country to town, and from town to country, as it chanced to miss me upon the road.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obliged humble servant, WALTER SCOTT.

The medal of Sir Walter, one of the subjects of this letter, has been engraved by Mr. A. J. Stothard, from the bust of Mr. Chantrey. It of course bears the motto selected by the Bard himself.

LETTER XXVIII.

The following answer to a stranger, a juvenile collector of autographs, is an instance proving the truth of the observation made by the biographer of Sir Walter in the Penny Magazine: "He was most punctual in answering letters, though the labour which the task involved, and much of it caused by uninvited correspondents, was often a real affliction."

SIR, *Edinburgh, March* 3, 1828.

Although the modern passion for collecting autographs of literary persons, has rendered the frequent recurrence of such request as yours a little inconvenient, yet it is impossible to decline an application, so complimentary in itself, made in so civil a manner.

I presume these lines will serve your purpose, and have the honour to be, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

POSTSCRIPT.

In reference to some passages in the Letters and Appendix, let it be observed, that (with every predilection for the new School of Poetry, at the head of which stands our deeply lamented friend)—"the British Critics" have sent their readers (more than once) to Pope and his contemporaries for sound sense, and for feeling, taste, and imagination, surpassing all poets of recent celebrity.

There are several articles in the British Critic, where the present writer was disposed to prefer regular versification to unlicensed measures; chaste colouring to the wild dashes of the pencil; landscape, distinct and clear, to scenes exuberantly rich and glowing; the pathos that comes home to our business and bosoms, to the monodies of romantic sensibility; characters drawn from nature and the life, and exhibiting actual manners and fashions, to personages disfeatured by caprice or distorted by demoniac fancy; statesmen to be recognised in peaceful councils, and heroes on the fields of war, to robbers or assassins from their unearthly aspect appalling, and chieftains breathing alternately "airs from Heaven and blasts from Hell;" and, in short, the repose that tranquillizes the mind and refreshes the spirits, to the "earthquake or the storm."

Peculiarly striking, therefore, was the coincidence of the following sentiments (just offered to my notice) with such preconceived opinions.

"In regard to Poetry in general, I am convinced," said Lord Byron, "that Moore, and all of us—Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Campbell, and all—are in the wrong, one as much as another;—that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free; and that the present and next generations will finally be of that opinion. I am the more confirmed in this, by having lately gone over some of our Classics, particularly Pope, whom I tried in this way:—I took Moore's poems, and my own, and some others, and went over them, side by side, with Pope's; and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance, in point of sense, learning, effect, and even *imagination*, passion, and invention, between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it was all Horace then, and is Claudian now, among us: and if I had to begin again, I would mould myself accordingly. Crabbe's the man; but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject; and * * * * is retired upon half-pay; and has done enough, unless he were to do as he did formerly." (Moore's Works of Byron, vol. iv. pp. 63, 64.)

* "There is more good sense, and feeling, and judgment, in this passage, than in any other I ever read or Byron wrote." So said Gifford, in a note on the above letter.

Notwithstanding all this, however, the new school has indisputable pretensions to the palm of originality. And, among its more distinguished disciples, I deem SOUTHEY great indeed! Southey was always, in my mind, the first of modern poets. Maugre the politics of his early life (such as were natural to a sanguine temperament, and such as young sincerity could not disguise), I have praised Southey even in the Anti-Jacobin Review, and had almost incurred my friend* Gifford's displeasure, by such criticism as he chose not to print, without a considerable abatement of my warm panegyric.

At that time Scott had not shone out in our literary hemisphere. It was long before Scott had flung through cathedral glooms his "dark illuminations,"† that, in a playful *jeu d'esprit*, Southey was described as superior to all our Bards of almost every period:

* * * * * *

"Such metrical monsters, ah! why do I mark,
While beams in my presence 'the Poet of Arc'?
Full soon great Eliza (though Tragedy lend her
From one Bard all the blaze of poetical splendour)
Shall yield to an era fast opening; and Anne,
(Though their race her prime poets so gloriously ran)
Shall veil to a COLERIDGE—a SOUTHEY—her bonnet,
Compared to a POPE, like an Ode to a Sonnet!"‡

* The Editor of the Anti-Jacobin Review.

† Such was T. Warton's fine expression.

‡ See "Visitation of the Poets," in the Appendix to Biographical Sketches of Cornwall, vol. ii.

This, perhaps, is extravagant praise—clashing with the "British Critic's" cooler judgment.

Still I would place Southey on a level with Scott. Not only as poets, but as prose-writers, I hail them pre-eminent over all our British authors that exist, or have existed, in this or the last century; and, for the virtues of the heart, I may justly add—

"quales neque candidiores
Terra tulit."——

Polwhele, Nov. 30. R. P.

POETRY, HISTORY, DIVINITY, MISCELLANIES;

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2. The Castle of Tintagel and the Isle of Poplars.—See Rack's Essays at pp. 330—and 451. Cruttwell, Bath. 1781.
3. Theocritus, Bion, Moschus and Tyrtæus—translated into English verse. 4to. Cadell and Davies.—1786.
4. Theocritus, &c. 2 volumes 8vo. new edit. Cruttwell, Bath.—1792.
5. Theocritus, &c. Sharpe's edit.—1810.
6. The English Orator, in four books.—Cadell and Dilly, 1786, 1789.
7. Poems; by Gentlemen of Devon and Cornwall, 2 vols. 8vo. Bath, Cruttwell.—1792.
8. Local Attachment.—1796.
9. Local Attachment, 2nd edit. Johnson.
10. Local Attachment, 3rd edit. Cradock and Joy.—1810.
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13. The Genius of Danmonium.—See Essays by a Society, &c. II. 542. Cadell.—1796.
14. The Old English Gentleman, 8vo. 1797.
15. The Unsex'd Females.—1798.
16. The Unsex'd Females, with various annotations; republished by Cobbett at New York.—1800.
17. Grecian Prospects. Cadell and Davies.—1799.

* The greater part have been long ago disposed of. But the above list will facilitate the inquiries of any future publisher, who may wish to reprint the author's works.

18. Translations from Lucretius. [See Anti-jacobin Review, vol. V. 341, 164. VI. 132, 141.]
19. Warlike Ode to Faithful Cornwall. Truro, Flindell.—1803.
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24. The Fair Isabel. Cawthorn.—1815.
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26. The Cave of Lemorna. [See "Forget Me Not" for 1831, at p. 51.]

HISTORY.

1. History of Devonshire, in 3 vols. fol.—1794, 1809—with plates.
2. History of Cornwall, in 7 vols. 4to, with plates.—1809.
3. Historical Views of Devon, 4to.
3. Memoir of Edm. Rack, in Collinson's "Somerset."

DIVINITY.

1. Discourses, 2 vols. 8vo.—1788.
2. Discourses, new edit.—1811.
3. A Sermon, preached at Kenton in 1793.
4. A Sermon, preached at Topsham, at the Archdeacon of Exeter's Visitation, in 1794. See Orthodox Churchman's Magazine for this and several other Sermons.
5. A Visitation Sermon, preached at Helston in 1796.
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20. Twenty-five Sermons, 2 vols. 8vo Rivington.—1813.
21. A Sermon preached at Kenwyn Nov. 16, 1817, on the death of the Princess Charlotte. Law and Whittaker.
22. Two Prize-Essays, on Adultery, and on the state of the Soul between Death and the Resurrection.
23. An Essay on the state of the Soul, &c. 2d edit.—Nichols and Son.—1819.
24. An Essay on the state of the Soul after Death by Eusebius Devoniensis. [See Class. Journal, XXII. 141, 155, 262, 276.]
25. Bishop Lavington's Enthusiasm of Methodism. Valpy.—1820.
26. Outlines of four Sermons. Hatchard and Son.—1824.

MISCELLANIES.

1. Essays on the Neglect of Authors in their own neighbourhood, and on the Partiality of Authors to their Brethren. [European Mag. 1795, pp. 262, 299.]
2. Historical Parallels; Diversity of Sentiment, &c. [Gent. Mag. LXIII. 899, 987.]
3. An Essay on Falconry. [See Essays by a Society, &c. I. 131, 164.]
4. An Essay on Principle and Feeling. [See Essays by a Society, II. 315, 336.]
5. Essays in the "*Spirit of Anti-Jacobinism*," for 1802, at pp. 117, 173, 278, 291.
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